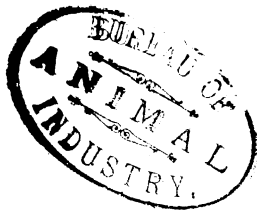


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CIRCULAR NO. 4.

United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY.

**CROSSING IMPROVED BREEDS OF SWINE WITH THE COMMON HOGS
OF FLORIDA.**

WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 28, 1895.*

The accompanying correspondence includes a letter of Hon. Robert W. Furnas, Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture of Nebraska, giving briefly the results of his experiments in cross breeding between Florida hogs and the improved breeds of swine, which is so interesting, valuable, and timely that its publication is recommended. There can be little doubt that many families of these animals have been "improved" to a point where they lack vigor, hardiness, and the normal power to resist disease. The quickest and surest way to recover these qualities is to cross with animals that are known to possess them in the highest degree. A skillful mingling of the blood of the Florida "razorbacks" with that of the highly-bred swine of the corn-producing States would no doubt be of great value to the farmers who depend so largely upon the hog crop for their annual income.

Very respectfully,

D. E. SALMON,

Chief of Bureau of Animal Industry.

Approved:

J. STERLING MORTON,

Secretary of Agriculture.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY,
Washington, D. C., October 31, 1895.

Hon. ROBERT W. FURNAS,
Secretary State Board of Agriculture,
Brownville, Nebr.

DEAR SIR: Secretary Morton requests me to write to you and ask you to make a statement for the information of this Department as to the result of your breeding from certain hogs that were obtained from Florida. He desires to know the character of the produce which you have secured — whether they can be fattened as profitably as the ordinary well-bred hogs of your country, and also whether you have had an opportunity to test their ability to resist hog cholera or other infectious diseases. The Secretary desires to be kindly remembered to you, and with best wishes from myself, I am,

Very respectfully,

D. E. SALMON,
Chief of Bureau.

NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE,
Brownville, Nebr., November 5, 1895.

Dr. D. E. SALMON,
Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR SIR: In reply to yours of October 31, relating to certain swine breeding experiments:

For years I have entertained the thought that largely the ills with which the hogs of this day are afflicted are attributable to injudicious breeding, and I may, with propriety add, careless handling; that the arbitrarily breeding to "fancy points" has correspondingly bred out the constitution, and thus the hog becomes a ready subject for many diseases.

In this connection another thought occurred: That if we could get back as near the original hog as possible, and obtain a dash of unpampered blood, it might be well. To this end I procured from the Everglades of Florida a pair of pure "razorbacks"—"elmpeelers"—"sunfish" specimens. The male I first crossed on two Red Duroc sows. The female product of this cross I again mixed by using a male Poland China, and with the sows of this cross I used a large male Yorkshire.

The results of this experimentation are to me most gratifying, showing an ideal hog for "family meat," if I may so express, and equally so for healthy, rustling characteristics, and good bone support.

Near neighbors around me have "swine diseases"—"cholera." There are no indications of any disease among my crosses; a few instances of disease among my "improved breeds," Poland, Chester Whites, Durocs, and Yorkshires. They all run promiscuously, in the same herd. I aim, however, in the exercise of the truism "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," to have no disease among my hogs.

The native Florida hog I find star rustlers, excellent feeders, prolific, and the sows the best of nursing mothers. These characteristics maintain in all the crosses I have made.

The original Florida hog does not "put on fat" excessively as do our improved strains; nor do they grow so large, nor mature so quickly. The quality of meat, however, is superb, tickling the appetite of the most fastidious pork-eating epicures, being characterized for rich, nutty flavor, with "streaks of lean and streaks of fat." This factor of quality is peculiarly manifest in all the crosses I have made.

After the first cross these hogs fatten as readily and cheaply as any other breeds. Experts, from a market standpoint, would find them wanting in size of ham, not noticeable in second and third crossing. Size of animal in first cross might be objectionable, yet they run up to 200 and 250 pounds quickly and cheaply. I marketed a first cross barrow at 16 months old at 480 pounds on foot.

I give you, briefly, my experience in this matter, and am free to express myself as abundantly gratified from a practical standpoint; that is, that it has resulted in obtaining a healthy strain of hogs, producing healthy human food. This, I infer, is substantially the information you wish.

Permit, in this connection, the suggestion that if more cleanliness is observed and care exercised in breeding, less ills and losses will attend the swine industry of the country.

At any time I may be able to aid in your work, command me.

Yours respectfully,

ROBT. W. FURNAS.